

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**The Coastal Program  
and  
The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program**

*Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife  
Through Voluntary Conservation*

**Vision Document**

*Part 1 of 3*

FY 2006-2010



***DRAFT – 6/3/05***

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## I. Executive Summary

PLACE HOLDER [The summary will be no more than one page in length and developed after main document is complete. It will include a general description of the three parts of the complete strategic plan.]

## II. Introduction

This Vision Document is for both the Coastal Program and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) Program because, while the Programs have different origins and focus areas, they share a common vision. Both Programs work toward the same core goals and accomplishment standards and share a common role in achieving the mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), which is “working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

At the heart of the Service’s mission are the conservation and management of the Federal Trust Resources: migratory birds; threatened and endangered species; inter-jurisdictional fish; certain marine mammals; and species of international concern. In turn, this is the ultimate objective of the work done by our Programs. While the Service works under an array of statutory authorities and resource management programs to meet its mandates, our Programs serve as a bridge to the owners and managers of Federal and non-Federal lands to develop partnerships which benefit fish and wildlife with a particular focus on Trust Resources. Our approach is to engage willing partners, through non-regulatory incentives, to conserve and protect wildlife habitat and values on their property.

Both Programs have grown in size and scope since their beginnings in the mid-1980’s and have gained important recognition as vanguards in the new era of cooperative conservation. As a result, the public investment in the Programs has increased along with a commensurate requirement for accountability.

The Strategic Plan for the Coastal and Partners Programs will address these important issues: how we identify needs and opportunities to serve our mission; how we strive for efficiency and effectiveness in our Program operations; and how we measure and account for our accomplishments. Five major goals have been identified as core components of our vision:

- Conserving habitat
- Demonstrating accountability
- Strengthening partnerships
- Improving information sharing and communication
- Enhancing our workforce

To help achieve these goals, the views of our stakeholders have and will continue to provide valuable guidance. At the outset of the strategic planning process, an outreach effort was conducted throughout the country to provide stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on the internal and external factors impacting the Programs’ current performance and future

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accomplishments. The results of that input provided valuable direction for the design and content of this document. Of note, the vast majority of stakeholders expressed strong support for both Programs citing their on-the-ground accomplishments, flexibility, technical expertise, and responsiveness to the needs and values of property owners and local communities as important strengths.

Additionally, in 2002, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget conducted a Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review of the Partners Program. The review outlined expectations for and means by which the Program can achieve greater efficiencies and higher returns on investments through focused planning.

This external guidance has been coupled with the experience, knowledge, and dedicated foresight of the staffs of the Coastal and Partners Programs to produce this Vision Document, which articulates our philosophy, goals, and desired operational outcomes.

*“Our responsibility to the Nation is to be more careful stewards of the land; we must be a constant catalyst for positive change.” – Gifford Pinchot*

### **III. Overview of the Coastal and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs**

The Coastal and Partners Programs are two of the Service’s most popular and effective programs for voluntary, citizen-based fish and wildlife conservation. The Coastal Program focuses on watershed-scale, long-term collaborative resource planning and on-the-ground projects in high priority coastal areas. Active in all 50 states and U. S. Territories, the Partner’s Program provides technical assistance and delivers on-the-ground conservation projects, particularly to our Nation’s private landowners, farmers, ranchers, and companies.

The Coastal and Partners Programs have joined with landowners, other citizens, and many partners nationwide to conserve fish and wildlife habitat in very significant ways. Through our partnerships, we have worked to conserve coastal and interior wetlands, streams and rivers, marshes and estuaries, and upland grasslands and forests from coast to coast. The power of our partnerships is clearly demonstrated by our accomplishments. As of 2004, together, the Programs have:

- Restored over 800,000 acres of coastal and interior wetlands
- Restored over 1,700,000 acres of coastal and interior prairie, shrub and forest upland habitat
- Restored over 7,500 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat
- Protected over 1,000,000 acres of habitat through conservation easements
- Implemented over 35,000 landowner and cooperative agreements
- Leveraged Federal tax dollars at least 3:1 through partnerships

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Although our two Programs share a common vision of citizen-centered conservation through partnerships, each Program has a unique role and focus for carrying forth the Service's mission.

## **COASTAL PROGRAM**

The Service's Coastal Program evolved from the establishment of the Chesapeake Bay/Estuary Program in 1985. In 1991, the Program took on a national focus with the addition of three new coastal areas, and with the support of the American public, has expanded its presence over the years to serve high-priority coastal areas. The Coastal Program is now active on all U.S. coasts, including the Great Lakes, Pacific Islands and Caribbean, focusing the Service's efforts in bays, estuaries, coastal streams, near shore and terrestrial habitats within high priority coastal watersheds.

As human population and development on our coastlines increase, stresses on coastal fish and wildlife resources increase commensurately. Many of these coastal watersheds are heavily urbanized areas where citizens of these communities depend on coastal natural resources and their habitats to make a living. Major environmental challenges include water quality and quantity and concerns that affect human and animal health. Coastal areas support 40% of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges, 40% of the Federally-listed endangered species (including 75% of the listed mammals and birds), 50% of the Service's fisheries activities, 25% of the Nation's wetlands, and at least 30% of North American wintering waterfowl. These habitats are clearly a Service priority.

With these extensively documented stresses to Trust Resources in the coastal environment, the Coastal Program promotes large-scale ecosystem-based policies, seeks partnerships to carry out the on-the-ground projects, and catalyzes public action to solve problems in the Nation's coastal areas. This has been accomplished by integrating the activities and authorities of the array of Service programs addressing fisheries, migratory bird and waterfowl management, habitat conservation, endangered species, environmental contaminants, law enforcement and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Coastal Program is organized around locally-based field coordinators who can provide a broad range of technical and financial assistance to help identify, develop, and implement unique, local conservation strategies. Coastal Program coordinators assist communities in conserving coastal resources through fish and wildlife habitat assessment, ecological restoration and protection, and outreach and education. Our technical assistance and leadership skills have helped catalyze coastal conservation projects on private and public lands, as well as Tribal lands. The large variety of partners we work with reflects the high population density and the complexity of ownership and governance of the Nation's coastal areas.

The Coastal Program is guided by the following ecological planning principles:

- Maintain natural ecosystem diversity, functions and productivity
- Promote self-sustaining populations of native species within their historic ranges
- Provide for ecologically sound levels of public use, economic benefits, and the enjoyment of natural values

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The Coastal Program was built on a framework of four interdependent major functions that have been proven successful. These are:

- Integrating Service activities in high-priority coastal watersheds to identify the most important natural resource problems and solutions
- Bringing the Service's biological expertise to the planning and decision-making processes of other Federal, local and state agencies
- Forming partnerships to implement solutions on the ground
- Using focused outreach to instill a stewardship ethic and catalyze the American public to help solve problems, change behaviors, and promote ecologically sound decisions

Partnerships resulting in on-the-ground actions are the major emphasis. As our partners recognize, habitat conservation and restoration are crucial to the protection of our fish and wildlife heritage, and the key is the on-the-ground implementation. However, the other functions are also integral to developing and supporting the strength of our partnerships.

*"The Coastal Program is flexible and adaptable in the way it addresses different coastal resource needs. It has the ability to deal with regional level coastal issues and to react rapidly to needs. The Coastal Program is very straight forward and clear as to ways that funds can be accessed and expectations. Interaction with Coastal Program staff is greatly valued and works well in our partnerships." --- Point Reyes Bird Observatory representative*

In addition to the work described above, the Coastal Program also co-administers (with the Service's Federal Assistance Program) the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program which provides grant monies to states through the Sport Fish Restoration Fund to protect and restore vital coastal wetlands.

The Coastal Program also helps administer the Coastal Barrier Resources Act. The Act takes a market-based approach to conservation that restricts certain Federal funding that encourages development in high-risk and biologically-rich coastal habitats.

## **PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM**

Since 1978, Service personnel have demonstrated a successful ability to work directly with landowners to improve fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. The Partners Program was established in 1987, with a core group of biologists and a small budget for on-the-ground wetlands projects on private lands. This successful, results-oriented Program has garnered support through the years and has grown into a larger and more diversified habitat restoration program, which today assists thousands of private landowners.

Migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, Federally-listed endangered, threatened or other declining or imperiled species are public resources, which by their migratory nature or declining numbers on a national scale, have been identified as Federal Trust Resources. The majority of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources occur on private lands (73%). Consequently, the conservation lands held by Federal and state agencies and other conservation groups cannot completely provide for fish and wildlife needs. Because the habitat needs of all Trust Resources

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cannot be met solely on public lands, public funds are also expended on private lands to accomplish habitat improvements through cooperative conservation programs such as the Partners Program.

The Partners Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes who are willing to work with us and other partners on a voluntary basis to help meet the habitat needs of our Trust Resources and other wildlife. The Partners Program operates in every State and territory and can assist with projects in all habitat types. Partners Program projects include those on private and other non-Federal lands that conserve the native vegetation, hydrology and soils associated with imperiled ecosystem types such as longleaf pine, bottomland hardwoods, tropical forests, native prairies, marshes, rivers and streams, or otherwise provide an important life requisite for a rare, declining or protected species.

The Partners Program community-based field biologists work with private landowners and other partners to plan, implement and monitor their projects. Partners field biologists help landowners find other sources of funding and help them through the permitting process, as necessary. This personal attention and follow-through is a significant strength of the Program that has led to national recognition and wide support.

*“Without the assistance and attention provided to me by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologist, I would not have signed up for any of the existing conservation programs.”*  
-- Harold May, private landowner, Mississippi

A 2004 National Poll of Hunters and Anglers conducted by the National Wildlife Federation reported that 87 percent of those surveyed favored expanding the Partners Program to continue helping private landowners restore and conserve fish and wildlife habitat on their property.

The Partners Program is guided by a national policy that has identified these objectives:

- Promote and implement habitat improvement projects that benefit Trust Resources
- Provide conservation leadership and promote partnerships
- Encourage public understanding and participation
- Work with USDA to implement USDA’s conservation programs.

(U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, section 640 fw1)

In addition, the Partners Program policy has established priority ranking factors to help guide project selection. These priorities are stepped down to the state and local levels as field staff collaborate with our stakeholders to further refine habitat priorities and geographic focus areas, described further in Part 2 of this Strategic Plan.

National priority ranking factors for the Partners Program are used to assign funding priority status to proposed projects that meet these conditions:

- Improve habitat for Federal Trust Resources, including threatened, endangered and candidate species; migratory birds; inter-jurisdictional fish; and other declining species
- Complement activities on National Wildlife Refuge System lands, or contribute to the resolution of problems on refuges that are caused by off-refuge practices
- Address species and habitat priorities that have been identified through Service planning teams (with our partners), or in collaboration with state fish and wildlife agencies



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- Reduce habitat fragmentation or serve as buffers for other important Federal or state conservation lands
  - Result in self-sustaining systems that are not dependent on artificial structures

If other considerations are generally equal, then priority is directed to those projects that have cooperative agreements of longer duration, multiple partners, cost sharing, and the greatest cost effectiveness. The overall goal of Partners Program projects is to return a site to the ecological condition that likely existed prior to loss or degradation.

#### **IV. Our Vision: Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife through Voluntary Conservation**

The Coastal and Partners Programs' vision of success is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats by working with others through voluntary partnerships. We envision our Programs continuing to encourage and equip citizens and their communities to play an ever-increasing role in the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat. We do this by providing the funding support, technical tools and assistance needed to make on-the-ground conservation affordable, feasible, and effective. We will continue to build upon this track record of habitat conservation accomplishment and, in doing so, will promote stewardship of fish and wildlife through voluntary conservation.

Along with our landowner partners, much of our work is done with a myriad of other Federal and non-Federal partners including state, Tribal, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and land trusts. We also work closely with other Service programs to help implement national plans such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, National Fisheries Strategic Plan, National Wildlife Refuge System Strategic Plan, National Shore Bird Plan, Partners in Flight, and Endangered Species Habitat Conservation and Recovery plans. Because of this experience, our Programs will become increasingly active in integrated Trust Resource conservation planning that will provide for Service-wide integrated management strategies for fish and wildlife conservation. Likewise, in this era of cooperative conservation, we will continue to provide biological and technical expertise other Federal agencies to complement their habitat initiatives.

#### **V. Our Approach: Voluntary Conservation to Achieve On-The-Ground Accomplishments**

##### **Our Conservation Challenge**

Our coastal areas are under acute pressure from population growth. Comprising less than 25 percent of America's land area, coastal counties are home to more than 50 percent of our total population—a share projected swell to 75 percent by the end of this decade.



More than 50 % of the Nation's wetlands have been destroyed, more than 70 % of the Nation's riparian habitats have been lost or significantly degraded, and 95 % of our tall grass prairie and longleaf pine forests have been lost. Further, less than 2 % of the Nation's rivers remain free flowing. These are just a few examples of habitat types impacted by human activities, as we live, work, and build our economy. Consequences of habitat loss include decreases in wildlife populations and many other natural, social, and economic impacts and, ultimately, a decreased quality of life.

Our voluntary, cooperative conservation Programs are based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and their government. The ability of government to protect fish and wildlife species increasingly relies on the willingness of citizens to become stewards who protect, enhance, and restore habitat.

The core principles for the Coastal and Partners Programs are founded in a hands-on approach to conservation through voluntary, non-regulatory and incentive-based partnerships. To achieve results at the local level, we conduct community education and outreach, assess the status and threats to species to fill information gaps, establish habitat-based partnerships, provide technical assistance, and provide financial assistance to implement projects.

The successes of these Programs rely on building trust and credibility with our partners. We achieve this by providing accurate information and being available to assist our partners in a timely manner, by leveraging resources, and by helping implement cost-efficient and effective projects. Our staffs in the Coastal and Partners Programs are experienced at helping people come together to forge and implement collaborative solutions that meet local and regional needs for fish and wildlife stewardship. Together, the two Programs constitute a successful, hands-on, progressive model for fish and wildlife conservation.

**Core Principles of the Coastal and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs**

- Voluntary
- Incentive-based conservation
- Environmental, economic and social benefits
- Cost efficient and effective habitat projects
- Leveraging resources through partnerships
- Public and private collaboration
- Focus on priority habitats and species
- Locally-based employees

*"We're willing to do what is right if people approach us right. It wasn't the program; it was the people we were working with." -- Steve & Margaret Cunningham, private landowners, Tennessee*

## **VI. Getting the Job Done: Our Goals**

### **Delivering the Service's Mission**

The Coastal and Partners Programs and our partners operate in a constantly changing natural, economic, social and political environment. In the face of these challenges, we seek to

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strategically allocate our collective resources, while remaining flexible in our response to change. Using the input from our partners and stakeholders, this plan documents where we envision the Coastal and Partners Programs to be in the future using five national-level goals. In implementing this plan, we remain committed to delivering the mission of the Service.

The goals are:

- Conserving Habitat
- Demonstrating Accountability
- Strengthening Partnerships
- Improving Information Sharing and Communication
- Enhancing our Work Force

## **Goal One: Conserving Habitat**

### *Restore and Protect Priority Habitats to Maintain and Increase Federal Trust Resource Populations*

Over the past two centuries, many of the natural communities upon which our Trust Resources depend have been lost or degraded. Because these lands were degraded incrementally over many years, we need to restore them in the same manner—one acre at a time. In addition, we need to protect key remaining natural habitats and the areas we restore. Protection can be achieved through tools such as landowner agreements, conservation easements, and acquisition. These conservation measures cannot happen immediately and require strategic planning and investment of labor and funding. Whether implementing on-the-ground projects ourselves, or providing assistance to others, we deliver the Coastal and Partners Programs to protect and restore priority habitats. Cumulatively, these acres contribute significantly to the sustainability of Trust Resources.

The national habitat priorities, determined in coordination with our partners and stakeholders through a region-by-region assessment of needs and opportunities, will determine what we deem most critical to benefit the fish and wildlife species we are entrusted to conserve. We step down these priorities to on-the-ground project planning and implementation, and use a series of national, regional and local filters to help focus our efforts to ensure that Program funds are spent wisely.

To achieve results at the local level, we conduct community education and outreach, establish habitat-based partnerships, and provide technical and financial assistance to implement projects. Our technical assistance to individual landowners includes habitat assessment, project design, consultation, coordination, grant writing, targeted outreach, and planning. Our technical assistance to agencies and organizations often results in policy and decision-making that have positive ecological and economic effect on tens of thousands of acres. Through these actions, taken in partnership with others, we affect changes on the landscape that result in the conservation of habitat for fish and wildlife populations held in Federal trust.

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## **Outcomes**

- Conservation of existing priority habitats to maintain Federal Trust Resource populations
- Restoration or enhancement of degraded habitats to increase or sustain Federal Trust Resource populations
- Conservation of healthy ecosystems

## **Goal Two: Demonstrating Accountability**

*Measure, assess, and report on the effectiveness, efficiency and fiscal integrity of our habitat conservation programs and activities*

The Coastal and Partners Programs are accountable to numerous Federal government-driven requirements, including Activity-Based Costing, Government Performance and Results Act, Office of Management and Budget directives, contracting policies and guidelines, and the DOI's and Service's Strategic Plans. Increasingly, internal management control reviews at the national and regional levels will be used to measure performance against these goals and requirements. A more formal external review will be added to the accountability process in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. An independent review board, consisting of one or more organizations, will be charged with periodically reviewing both Programs in terms of effectiveness and overall performance. However, accountability to all of our valued partners, stakeholders, and the public is perhaps the most important and long-lasting responsibility.

The Programs will continue to refine effective accountability measures to document the success of our voluntary conservation partnerships and accompanying on-the-ground fish and wildlife habitat-related benefits. During the life of this Strategic Plan, new accountability standards will emerge to measure and report biological responses to our conservation practices. However, to begin the process of describing biological responses, we will tie our work to existing peer-reviewed conservation plans that have already identified expected benefits from conservation activities in specific geographical areas. Linking our efforts to these existing plans will suffice in reporting our anticipated biological responses or outcomes. This will provide our Programs and stakeholders a much better understanding of the fish and wildlife benefits derived from our projects and an opportunity to improve our conservation practices.

We will incorporate new and innovative tools to: (1) meet strategic goals of the Programs as described in this Strategic Plan; (2) develop and implement regional and/or local step down plans; (3) administer and deliver efficient and effective Programs that support key national plans and program policies; and (4) undertake two-way communication regarding our progress and success with stakeholders. The Service will work with states and other partners to describe the biological benefits of conservation practices. This information will help weigh the effectiveness of practices and provide feedback to improve efficiency and maximize environmental results. A component of this effort will also involve analyzing the cumulative effect of several projects in a watershed and examining how best to calculate the biological or environmental response to habitat restoration.

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## **Outcomes**

- Cost-effective and operationally-efficient administration and successful delivery of habitat restoration, enhancement and protection activities
- Program funding allocations in accord with the fiscal integrity and policy intent of the Coastal and Partners Programs
- Implementation of projects in priority areas identified in Part 2 of this Strategic Plan
- Fully developed and utilized Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) database as a primary tool for tracking and measuring Program activities and success
- Management Control Reviews conducted to ensure goals and objectives are met in an efficient and effective manner
- Documentation and assessment of the biological response to on-the-ground conservation efforts
- Stakeholders actively involved with and supporting the goals and continued growth of the Coastal and Partners Programs

## **Goal Three: Strengthening Partnerships**

### *Accomplish our work through voluntary partnerships*

This goal supports an important component of the Service’s mission “to work with others” by engaging external partners and other Service programs in stewardship activities that restore, enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitats. A shared interest in habitat conservation is the foundation of our partnerships.

Our partners include Federal, Tribal, state and local government agencies; non-governmental organizations; private corporations; foundations; land trusts; and individual landowners. Both Programs develop partnerships taking into consideration the priorities and opportunities in their geographic areas. Partnerships may be established using formal mechanisms such as cooperative and landowner agreements, or less formal approaches. The technical assistance provided by our Programs is integral to both formal and informal partnerships.

We are more effective partners when we can contribute to shared conservation goals. One of our primary contributions is “state-of-art” species and habitat information that we use to promote conservation and stewardship. In our partnership role, we can also use funding and/or technical assistance to influence the design and scope of plans and projects. The Service’s biological expertise and field presence help ensure that projects are cost-effective and targeted to benefit important fish and wildlife resources.

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## **Outcomes**

- Strengthened existing partnerships
- Increased effectiveness of partnerships in addressing priority fish and wildlife needs
- Increased knowledge and awareness among partners of natural resource stewardship opportunities and the related benefits to the human and natural environments
- Broadened partnership base that includes partners that have not been traditionally involved in the Coastal and Partners Programs

## **Goal Four: Improving Information Sharing and Communication**

*Collaborate and share information and concerns with our partners, stakeholders, potential future partners, decision-makers, and others to protect, restore, and enhance Trust Resources*

Effective communication is key to engaging, recruiting, and enlisting the many stakeholders and decision makers required for successful conservation. We must promote and increase awareness and understanding of the Programs' stewardship vision to encourage voluntary participation and greater community support for both the Programs and habitat conservation. It is important to reach out and establish trusting relationships with partners that will foster a shared sense of stewardship necessary for successful collaboration. We use many tools to communicate including: (1) one-on-one communication with partners; (2) public meetings; (3) media exposure; (4) brochures and other written material; and, (5) an Internet presence via the world-wide web. In addition, we foster intra- and interagency exchange of information to enhance the success of projects.

On a national basis, the Programs will actively participate in Service efforts to give the general public access to information on Service priorities and strategies for habitat conservation. The Programs will work with current Service initiatives to increase overall Service effectiveness and customer service. The Programs will also work with interagency and state agency efforts to assess and describe the biological response that is occurring as a result of our habitat restoration and protection activities. In particular, the Programs will work with the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and other DOI bureaus to quantify the benefits derived from various incentive-based approaches to habitat conservation.

## **Outcomes**

- Increased awareness and support of the Programs' priorities by the public and other entities
- Increased knowledge and awareness of natural resource stewardship and means to integrate conservation practices on private lands

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- Increased participation with other agencies and partners in project development and implementation resulting in increased local conservation activities
  - Increased public participation in the Programs, resulting in more projects delivered and more resources for the Programs
  - Increased awareness of the cumulative biological benefits of projects

### **Goal Five: Enhancing Our Workforce**

*The staffs of our Partners and Coastal Programs are our most important resource. Maintaining and supporting those staff are the keys to the success of the two Programs in achieving on the ground results for Federal Trust Resources.*

Successful implementation of the Partners and Coastal Programs requires a diverse, highly skilled, and motivated workforce. The Service is committed to having highly capable people who are results-focused, act with integrity, and seek creative solutions in the conservation of Trust Species and wildlife habitat. Within budgetary constraints, the Service will strive to provide adequate staffing to address national, state, regional and local resource priorities, and to meet the needs of the public. Employees will also have access to the technical and financial tools necessary to meet the demands of both Programs. The Service will also ensure adequate training to field and support staff in a variety of habitat conservation tools and team building techniques necessary to address the resource priorities, maintain excellent customer service, and deliver a diverse array of habitat conservation projects. Team building includes the Service, our partners and other stakeholders. In response to the President's Management Agenda, the Service has initiated a Workforce Planning process. The Coastal and Partners Programs will, within the Strategic Plan timeframe, develop workforce plans in compliance with DOI and OMB standards.

### **Outcomes**

- Locally-available staff with state-of-the-art conservation knowledge, skills and abilities to share with partners and stakeholders to deliver on-the-ground projects
- Trained biologists and support staff teams to deliver both Programs
- Optimized use of our expertise for technical assistance

## **VII. Next Steps: From Vision to Results**

In this Vision Document we have described our vision of what is expected of the Coastal and Partners Programs. The remainder of the Strategic Plan will describe how and where we will operate to meet these expectations. Part 2, "Regional Step-down Plans" identifies habitat priorities and focus areas as developed by our regional and field offices, through collaboration with stakeholders, and performance targets based on estimated funding levels. Part 3, is a compilation of regional priorities into separate "National Summary Document" for the two Programs identifying habitat priorities and performance targets for FY2006 through FY2010.

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*“All acts of government...are of slight importance to conservation except as they affect the acts and thoughts of citizens.”—Aldo Leopold*

**To learn more about our Programs and how to find a local contact go to our web sites:**

**Partners Program:** <http://www.fws.gov/partners/>

**Coastal Program:** <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalProgram>

**Coastal Grants Program:** <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Branch of Habitat Restoration  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
(703) 358-22001

## VIII. Glossary

**Biological Response:** The reaction of fish, wildlife, plants and other living indicators to the project or series of projects.

**Conservation:** Any single or group of actions or decisions that are made to support the fish and wildlife values of a habitat. For the purposes of this document, it is intended to be an all-inclusive term including (but not limited to) restoration, enhancement, establishment, maintenance, protection, preservation, monitoring, outreach, coordination, assessment, and education for fish and wildlife habitat values.

**Enhancement:** The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of existing habitat to change specific functions.

**Establishment:** The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a habitat to create and maintain habitat that did not previously exist.

**Federal Trust Resources:** The group of species including migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, inter-jurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and species of international concern, for which the Service has a specific legal mandate.

**Habitat Improvement:** Any habitat restoration, enhancement, or establishment intended to increase the suitability of an area for a species or community.



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**Incentive-based:** The provision of goods or services, such as financial or technical assistance, for the purpose of motivating the entity to make a favorable decision that might not be made otherwise.

**Maintenance:** The periodic additional work involving the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics present that is critical for the continuing success of a restoration process.

**Monitoring:** The collection and assessment of repeated observations or measurements over time to evaluate the effectiveness of actions. The following types of monitoring are recognized:

**Baseline:** Characterizes existing conditions before an action begins. Establishes a benchmark against which the success of the activity or project can be measured.

**Implementation or Compliance:** Assesses whether the activity or project was carried out in accordance to the contract, plan, or guidance.

**Effectiveness:** Determines whether the activity or project has had the desired effect on selected indicators or performance criteria.

**Validation:** Establishes a cause and effect relationship between the project or activity and one or more selected biological indicators (e.g. the population size of the targeted species the project was intended to benefit.)

**Partnership:** A group of people and/or organizations that have formed a relationship to promote an activity or idea.

**Protection:** A long-term action to safeguard habitats of significant importance to fish and wildlife species.

**Restoration:** The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning the natural functions to lost or degraded landscapes.

**Science-based:** Founded in information that has been subject to the application of an objective scientific methodology, generally assumed to include rules for concept formation, observation, experimentation, and the validation of hypotheses, and enhanced by review of peers with expertise in the subject matter.

**Stakeholder:** An individual, group of people, and/or organization that have an interest in an activity or idea.

**Technical Assistance:** Collaboration, facilitation, or consultation that relates to a habitat conservation, restoration, or enhancement initiative.

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